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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Letter dated 4 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information regarding the measures being taken by the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of promotion and protection of the rights of children (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session under item 68 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
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Annex to the letter dated 4 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the measures being taken in the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of protecting the rights of children

Protecting the interests of children has been elevated to the level of State policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in December 1992. To date, two country reports of the Republic of Uzbekistan on its implementation of the Convention's provisions have been submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In order to carry out the Committee's recommendations, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan drew up and is implementing a National Action Plan and has also adopted more than 15 regulatory legal instruments.

The Republic has established a strong system of legislation for protecting the rights of children. Practically all legislative acts take into account the principle of ensuring the best protection of the interests of children. A large number of the more than 90 regulatory legal instruments on social protection relate to the rights of children. They are protected by norms laid down in the Constitution, the Family, Labour and Criminal Codes and other laws.

The rights of children are also enshrined in a number of documents such as the State Programme for Reforming the Health-Care System, the Act of the Republic of Uzbekistan on education, the Nationwide Personnel Training Programme and the State National Programme for the Development of School Education for 2004-2009.

The adoption by the Cabinet of Ministers on 15 January 2007 of the Action Programme to Ensure the Welfare of Children, which is currently being implemented at all levels of government with the active support of non-state and non-commercial organizations, was a further clear indication of the State's constant and all-round concern for the younger generation.

Particular attention is given to social programmes aimed at caring for the younger generation and improving their living conditions.

In this area, the Uzbek Government adopted and implemented several important State programmes and resolutions, in particular, "The Family", "A Healthy Generation" (2000), "Mothers and Children" (2001), "The Environment, Maternity and Childhood" (2001), " Additional Measures to Strengthen the Health of Women and the Younger Generation" (2002), "Measures to Implement Priority Objectives in Promoting Medical Culture in Families and Improving the Health of Women, in Childbirth and Raising a Healthy Generation" (2002), "Kindness and Charity" (2004) and others.

Upon the initiative of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov, 2007 was declared the Year of Social Protection in Uzbekistan. In this connection, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the Year of Social Protection State Programme. It

provides, inter alia, for the adoption of specific measures for further improving the situation of children, providing them with comprehensive support and strengthening the legal mechanisms for protecting their rights and interests. The Programme also gives special attention to providing differentiated social protection to the children of needy families, children with limited opportunities, and children who are orphans and deprived of parental care.

As part of the implementation of this State Programme, work is being completed on drawing up a draft law on guarantees for the rights of children, which was prepared with the active support of the ministries and departments concerned as well as experts from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The draft law will be submitted this year to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for consideration and adoption.

Within the framework of implementing the State Programme for the Development of School Education, in the past three years in the Republic 143 new schools were built and 674 were reconstructed; and major repairs were carried out in 2,228 schools. It is planned that the work of upgrading the physical and technical infrastructure of all the Republic's almost 10,000 schools will be completed by 2009.

It should be noted that the Government accords particular attention to creating all the necessary conditions and providing psychological, medical, social and pedagogical assistance for children with limited opportunities.

At the present time, 86 special boarding schools for children with limited opportunities are in operation in Uzbekistan.

Under the Year of Social Protection Programme, the scope of practical measures to educate children requiring medical assistance is constantly being expanded.

Various projects are being carried out in this area. For example, the general education for children with limited opportunities project is currently being implemented in accordance with an agreement between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Asian Development Bank. The project, with an overall value of $1.5 million, is to last three years and comprises six special boarding schools and 20 general education schools. It is designed to provide help for teaching children requiring medical assistance in general education schools, carry out major repairs and maintenance in educational institutions, upgrade their physical and technical infrastructure, create special means and facilities for inclusive education and provide the necessary equipment and so forth.

The education of a harmoniously developed personality would be impossible without instilling in the younger generation a culture of sport and of a healthy way of life. This distinct major area was also emphasized in the State Programme to Develop Children's Sports.

In 2003 alone, 106 sport complexes, stadiums, gymnasiums and playgrounds, 75 (71 per cent) of which are in rural areas, were built, reconstructed or repaired. The following year, the ratio of these indicators stood at 120 to 93 (78 per cent), in 2005 — 153 to 128 (83 per cent), and in 2006 the percentage increased by a further 2 per cent. This year, 174 sport facilities, 149 (86 per cent) of them in rural areas, will be built or renovated.

Over the past three years, on the initiative of the National Children's Sports Development Fund, special days during school children's summer holidays have regularly been held under the motto "Not a day without sports".

Uzbekistan has been actively cooperating with UNICEF in creating favourable living conditions for children and ensuring their interests. The UNICEF office in Uzbekistan, together with the Republic's relevant ministries and departments, is currently carrying out work in six priority areas relating to protecting the rights of children. These areas comprise safeguarding the health of mothers and children, ensuring quality education, protection of children, raising the potential of local leaders, and family education.

Special mention should also be made of the active support provided by UNICEF in such fields as the deinstitutionalization of children deprived of family care, the creation of a juvenile justice system and the institution of a children's ombudsman as well as the development of the institution of social workers.

In 2006, UNICEF began to provide support to the Government of Uzbekistan in drawing up a draft law on juvenile justice. The law will make it possible to strengthen the guarantees for respecting the rights of minors who have come into conflict with the law.

It should also be noted that, in addition to State agencies, non-governmental and civic organizations, including Soglom avlod uchun, Kamolot, the Forum for the Culture and Art of Uzbekistan, Mehr nuri, Sen elgiz emassan, Hayot, Ayollar kengashi and others, are also actively working in areas relating to protecting the rights of children. These and other civic organizations regularly carry out various measures to improve the situation of mothers and children and protect the rights and interests of the younger generation.